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U.S. Details Evidence in Espionage Trial

Spy Film, Secret Compartments Described in Case Against Pole

By CHARLES MAHER, *Times Staff Writer*

Cleverly packaged spy film, a tie rack with secret compartments and a hollowed-out wooden carving all figured in a story related to a Los Angeles jury Wednesday at the trial of a Polish national charged with espionage.

The narrator, Assistant U.S. Atty. Robert S. Brewer Jr., said the government would prove that Marian W. Zacharski, 30, conspired with an American to obtain sensitive U.S. defense information for Polish agents.

However, the government's story was dismissed as untrustworthy by defense attorney Edward M. Stadum, who portrayed the prosecution's key witness as a Judas willing to betray his country for \$110,000 "in coin and cash."

That witness is William Holden Bell, 61, a former Hughes Aircraft Co. engineer. Bell was indicted with Zacharski but has pleaded guilty to one count of passing defense information and has agreed to help the prosecution.

In his opening statement, Brewer told a jury in U.S. District Judge David V. Kenyon's Court that the government would establish its case in coming weeks through about 45 witnesses and 250 pieces of evidence.

Brewer said Bell would testify that he compromised his position at Hughes because of financial difficulties and agreed to supply classified information to Zacharski and unidentified Polish agents. Zacharski had promised Bell he could "make a lot of money," Brewer said.

Zacharski and Bell lived at the same Playa del Ray apartment complex and met there in 1977. Bell supplied "numerous documents" to Zacharski in 1978, Brewer said, and made the first of a series of trips to Europe the following year to deliver film of other documents to Polish agents.

The prosecutor said Zacharski had given Bell a camera and "special film" to photograph documents at Hughes.

Brewer said the film appeared to be Kodak Super 8. The first five or six feet of the film and the last five or six were in fact regular Kodachrome, Brewer said, but about 34 feet in the middle was "high-resolution black-and-white film" used to photograph documents.

The prosecutor said Bell flew to Innsbruck, Austria, in November, 1979, to meet two men, one of whom gave a password by asking, "Are you a friend of Marian?"

However, the two men did not like the way Bell was carrying the film, Brewer said, and gave him a tie rack "with three concealed areas," telling him in the future to carry film in the rack or in a black vinyl bag they also supplied.

Brewer said the two men instructed Bell to end his relationship with Zacharski, but when Bell returned home, Zacharski countermanded the order.

The prosecutor said Bell delivered film to Polish agents on three other trips to Europe: to Innsbruck, Linz, Austria, and Geneva. Brewer said Bell was given a "code name" on the Linz trip, but he did not say what it was.

Bell will testify that before the third trip, he photographed documents relating to a "covert all-weather gun system" and an anti-tank weapon called a TOW missile, Brewer said.

The prosecutor said Bell was promised \$60,000 a year and received money from Polish agents in Europe and from Zacharski in the United States.

FBI agents investigating the case questioned Bell June 23. He acknowledged his activities the same day, Brewer said, and later agreed to wear a concealed recorder during a conversation with Zacharski.

In that conversation, the prosecutor said, Zacharski said, "no problem" when asked if the film was "coming out all right."

Agents searched Zacharski's apartment after his arrest on June 28, Brewer said, and found, among other things, "a wooden carved figure" that will "come apart if turned upside down." Brewer did not say what was inside.

However, Stadum said a small compartment inside the figure was empty.

Stadum's opening statement indicated the defense will rely on what he called the "untrustworthy" nature of Bell's testimony.

Government's Guest

"His position here is one of self-interest," Stadum said. "He has entered into an agreement with the government that he hopes will lead to more lenient treatment of him."

Bell has "worked hand-in-hand with agents of the FBI," Stadum said, and has been the government's guest at a Brentwood motor inn

"while he has worked up his testimony."

Stadum said Zacharski was president of the Polish American Machinery Co. and was "on a commercial mission" in the United States. At worst, Stadum said, it might be shown Zacharski "carried out activities in loyalty to his own government."

On the other hand, Stadum said, Bell has "violated his company's policies and rules and the laws . . . of his own country."

Question Posed

"He will not tell you he did these acts for political principle," Stadum said. "He wanted money, and he got it—\$110,000 in coin and cash."

Stadum said the FBI had been on the case about 2½ years before Bell and Zacharski were arrested. If this was a major espionage case, Stadum asked, why did the FBI "let it go on" so long?

In fact, Stadum said, the information Bell allegedly supplied was "relatively harmless and useless."

However, the government's first witness, Maj. Gen. Richard X. Laffin, said information about the TOW antitank missile would be of value to foreign nations.